

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

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RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE

TS AUTH. REASON(S)

BLACK HEBREWS HAVE SETTLED IN KALANDIYA.

ENDORSE EXISTING MARKING(S)

DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒

Zvi Lavie

RELEASE DENIED ☐

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

Ma'ariv, p.2

The leader of the Black Hebrews, Ben Ami Carter, has established a new base, this time in the occupied territories, with the purchase of a villa in the Arab village of Kalandiya, near Ramallah. Groups of this sect are spending weekends at the villa and apparently some of the members will be living there permanently.

The sect's leadership has meanwhile hired Arab teachers to give Arabic lessons to the children and grown-ups. These and other details not known heretofore regarding the clandestine activities of this sect were stated in the Knesset yesterday by two Black Hebrews who have rebelled against Carter's leadership. They met with M.K. Dov Shilansky (Likud). They were accompanied by two Jewish residents of Dimona who said they represented an actions committee established in the town to exert pressure on the Interior Minister not to implement the recommendations made by the Glass committee (to grant the Black Hebrews resident status).

M.K. Shilansky was told that contrary to what the committee had been told, the Black Hebrews are still being joined by additional members even now. They arrive in the guise of tourists, pilgrims and professional groups such as doctors and policemen from the U.S.

One of the Black Hebrews who went to the Knesset is known in the sect as Gedaliah Ben Israel (his original name is Bernard Punch) and he asked M.K. Shilansky to help free his wife and baby, who are in Ben Ami Carter's "fortress" in Dimona. The leader refuses to let him see them since the husband's "desertion". He says he asked the Police to help him, but they refused. After

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the meeting M.K. Shilansky contacted the Chief of Police and asked the police to intervene.

The husband recounted that his wife had given birth three times and on each occasion the baby had died. They were buried secretly on one of the hills near Dimona and the parents were not allowed to be present at the funeral. According to him a considerable number of people belonging to the sect who had died were buried in a similar manner, in unmarked graves.

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THE THREAT OF BLACK MAIL

The Post's YOSEF GOELL criticizes the Glass Committee's recommendation that the Black Hebrews be allowed to remain in Israel.

THE BLACK HEBREWS, under the leadership of a self-proclaimed messiah, Ben Ami Carter, is one of a myriad of revivalist groups which sprang up during the last couple of decades, with the heightening of black awareness in the U.S.

This particular group originated from Chicago and its environs and began to infiltrate (the exact word) illegally into Israel 10 years ago under the noses of a "Keystone Cops" Interior Ministry, which is formally responsible for determining who may or who may not enter and remain in Israel.

The original group came to Israel after it was expelled from Liberia, a Black African state which makes no bones about taking direct action against unwanted aliens who happen to be black.

Its members have since congregated in one section of the Negev development town of Dimona where, because of the continued influx of fellow sectarians and of their high birth rate, they have been living in abominably overcrowded conditions.

The Interior Ministry has opposed the entry of members of the sect into Israel and their remaining here; but it does not know what to do about the continued infiltration of sect members short of adopting a horrifyingly discriminatory policy against all black visitors from the U.S.

BECAUSE THE ministry dithered for 10 years over what to do, and in effect did nothing, the Glass Committee was appointed several years ago to study the problem. It has now submitted a report urging that the Black Hebrews be permitted to stay, in a special settlement to be

erected for them, on condition that their leaders undertake to dissuade additional sect members from the U.S. from joining them.

The committee openly admits that the Black Hebrews do not belong in Israel, which is a tiny country that must serve as the only home of the Jewish people and of the indigenous Arab population born here.

Then it adduces a double rationale for permitting the group to remain here (despite the illegal nature of its entry) and for allowing its members to become naturalized in due time: the political embarrassment entailed in Israel's having to expel them forcibly in the full glare of international media publicity, and the fear that the sect, which is under the total domination of the charismatic Ben Ami Carter and a group of "elders," may resort to a Jonestown-type mass suicide once it becomes aware of preparations for such an expulsion.

These are serious considerations, indeed. They are, however, serious enough to militate against any "solution" that would leave Israel subject to such blackmail on both counts for the unforeseeable future.

It may well be, as the committee believes, that Israel is simply not prepared at present to deal with both threats. But that is no reason to adopt a solution that promises to perpetuate a problem with racial overtones in a country that is already beset by numerous other problems, which mercifully do not include racial ones.

THE TROUBLE with the Black Hebrews is not that they are black but that they have infiltrated into the country by subterfuge; that

they are organized as a closed — alien — sect under the domination of a charismatic personality; and that they make no secret of their determination not to become integrated into the country.

It would be nice to believe that the 1,500 or so Black Hebrews (no one knows their exact number) will eventually become an integral part of modern Israel and serve as a welcome pluralistic seasoning to the country's ethnic mix. But there is absolutely no evidence to back up such wishful thinking.

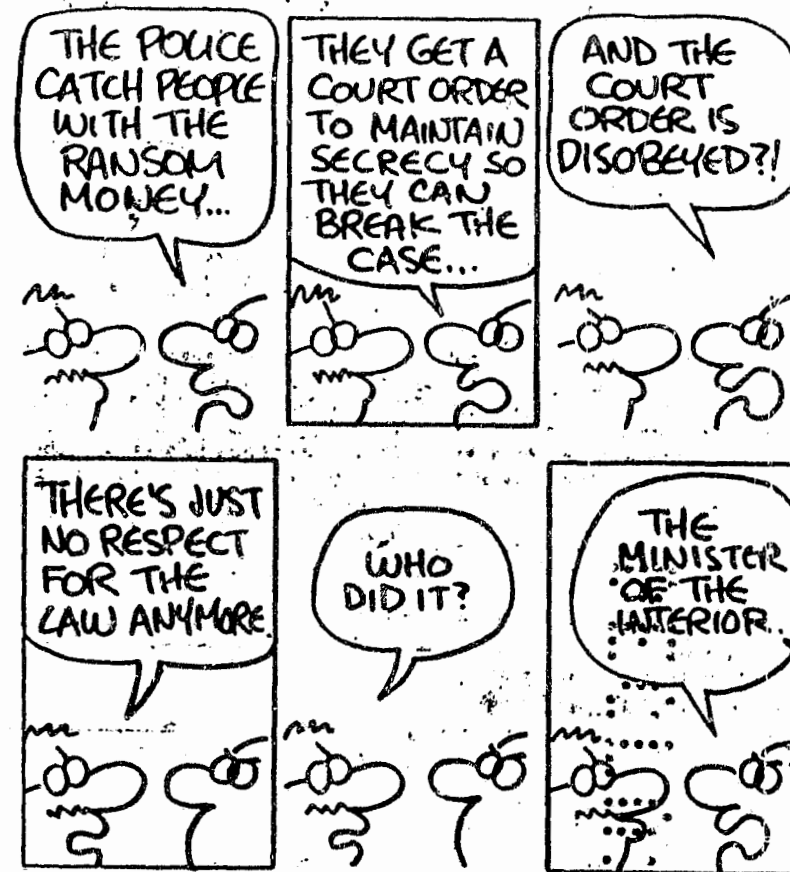
One could argue that it is possible that a number of individual Black Hebrews will integrate into the larger society. But the committee's recommendation that the group be resettled as a sect in a discrete new settlement obviates even such a theoretical possibility.

ONE OF THE basic elements of sovereignty is the right of every people organized in its own state to determine who is to be permitted to join it. Every sovereign state has an immigration policy to back up that right. Neither the Americans nor the Swiss (the best example Israel could follow), nor the Liberians (who expelled the Black Hebrews) permit anyone who simply expresses the desire to enter their borders and settle among them to do so.

Nor should the Israelis, with their densely populated and ethnically variegated country, be required to abdicate that right under the blackmail threat of a spurious racial argument.

The case of the Black Hebrews does not even raise simple humanitarian issues which Jewish Israel should be the first to

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recognize as a legitimate reason for bending her immigration laws.

First, Israel has provided impressive proof of her humanitarian sensitivity on such issues by taking the initiative and admitting several groups of Vietnamese "boat people." Second, Chicago is not the South China Sea or the Cambodia-Thailand border; the Black Hebrews are not hapless refugees.

THE BLACK HEBREW problem, which has been permitted to fester because of the Interior Ministry's poor judgment and lack of courage, raises complex and delicate issues. The Glass Committee recommends a short-term "solution" to that problem at the cost of a long-term aggravation of Israel's social

problems, what the Hebrew would be called a reason "for the weeping of future generations."

The committee reportedly sat on its recommendations for close to a year, waiting for an opportune moment to spring them on the public. It would be well if the government, despite its other troubles, found the presence of mind to reject them as unsatisfactory, and sought a better solution.

It would also be permissible to seek the aid of the U.S. in dealing with a problem which, after all, concerns American citizens, even if the members of the sect have destroyed their American passports, as reported, and taken other steps to conceal their original identity.